



DMHAS Update

January 2023

Message from Commissioner Nancy Navarretta

Inside this issue:

Peer Certification Update 2

CVH Waste Initiative 2

Sequential Intercept Mapping 3

Prevention Corner: TPEP 4

Human Trafficking Awareness Month 5

Happy New Year! Let it be with gratitude that we enter this new year as we bid a respectful and fond farewell to the old. I am excited for the promise that this new year holds, and this newsletter is a reflection of the diverse and impactful work we hope to do in 2023. In addition to a new format, this month's newsletter brings important news for substance use treatment, as well as updates from our initiatives in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

As we look forward to this new year, I want to express my gratitude to our partners in this work—for your dedication, efforts, and expertise. As always, please feel free to share your ideas and feedback. I wish you all happiness, health, and many blessings in 2023!



Elimination of the X Waiver Requirement

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) announced the elimination of requirements related to the X-waiver. According to the DEA and SAMHSA announcements, effective immediately:

- Prescriptions for buprenorphine do not require an X-waiver number, only the DEA registration number;
- Limits on the number of patients a practitioner may treat with buprenorphine have been removed; and
- SAMHSA will no longer accept Notices of Intent for X-waiver registration.

The X-waiver, a special DEA certification that allowed clinicians to prescribe buprenorphine (Suboxone), a partial opioid agonist that curbs opioid cravings, has long been considered a hurdle to improving treatment access for patients who struggle with opioid addiction. Removal of the X waiver now opens up the capability of prescribing to a much broader group of clinicians. The removal of the X-waiver stems from the [Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment \(MAT\) Act](#), which was recently signed into law. [Click here for more information.](#)



Peer Recovery Support Certification Update

Upcoming Peer Recovery
Support Certification Advisory

Committee Meeting:
2/23/23 ([Registration](#))

[Previous Meetings](#)

[Peer Recovery Support
Certification FAQ](#)

DMHAS continues the process of developing a centralized Peer Recovery Certification to ensure that one standardized set of Peer Principles, Core Competencies, and Code of Ethics are endorsed statewide and is in alignment with State of Connecticut, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Association for Addiction Professionals National Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist (NCPRSS), and other states' best practices.

The Advisory Committee conducted its first meeting in July of 2022, and has held six meetings to date with two more scheduled. DMHAS has encouraged the committee to develop their recommendations without influence, and the meetings (held via Zoom) have been open to the public and the recordings posted on the [DMHAS Office of Recovery Community Affairs webpage](#). The public has also been invited to offer input and ask questions through the qualtrics survey tool monitored by the [Yale Program For Recovery and Community Health \(PRCH\)](#).

The Subject Matter Expert Committee recently held an Orientation Meeting on January 17, 2023 with the [Connecticut Certification Board \(CCB\)](#). The CCB will act as the coordinator between the Subject Matter Expert Committee and representatives from [Prometric, Inc.](#), which is the psychometric company that will be guiding the Subject Matter Expert Committee members through the credential and exam development process.

Stay tuned for further updates as this process moves forward. If you have any questions please contact DMHAS Director of Recovery Community Affairs, [Elsa Ward](#).

Spotlight on CVH Food Waste Initiatives

The [Center for EcoTechnology \(CET\)](#), a non-profit organization that works to research, develop, and promote technologies which have the least disruptive impact on the natural ecology of the Earth, recently spotlighted the food waste reduction program at Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH). Food is the number one material sent to incinerators and landfills in America. It is estimated that Americans throw out 40% of our food every year.

In 2019, the State of Connecticut enacted [Executive Order 1](#), which included a new mandate for state institutions to divert food waste through an expanded "Lead by Example" sustainability initiative. Last year, after previously partnering with a pig farm, Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) connected with CET as they sought new ways to reduce food waste. With the goal of collecting and diverting food waste, the hospital devised a system to store scraps in a cooler in between pickups. CET had worked with CVH throughout the year to help prepare for storing and collecting food scraps. CET assisted in moving the process forward, meeting frequently to check-in while CVH worked on soliciting bids for a freezer. CET provided signage for the new system and CVH trained their staff internally on new processes.

Finally, CET connected the hospital with [Blue Earth Compost](#), who now takes the hospital's scraps for processing at an anaerobic digestion facility. By diverting food scraps away from landfills and incinerators and towards composting, larger organizations such as CVH can help to reduce its overall environmental footprint. Campaigns such as this are important in that they feed the Earth rather than landfills and incinerators.

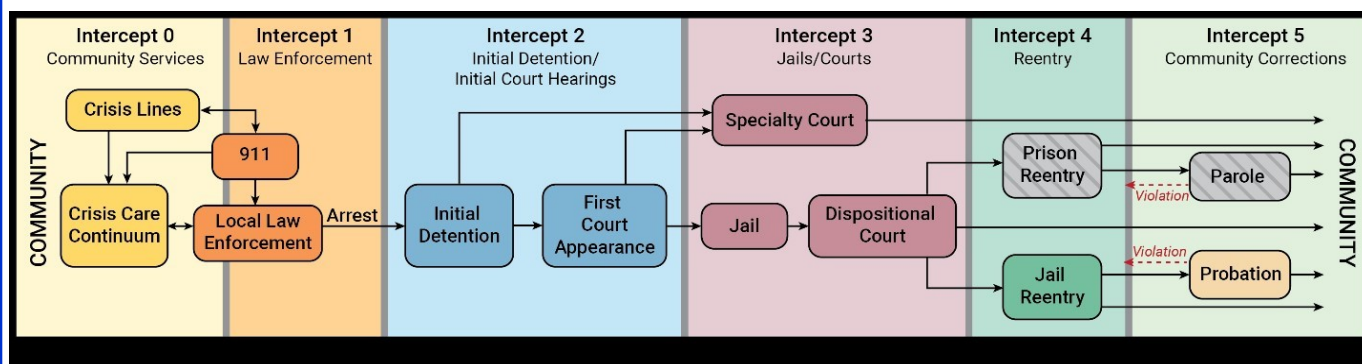


DMHAS Launches Sequential Intercept Mapping in Fairfield

Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) is designed to tap into local expertise by bringing together key stakeholders to develop a “map” that illustrates how people with mental health and substance use disorders come in contact with and flow through the local criminal justice system. This map identifies opportunities and resources for diverting people away from criminal justice involvement and/or unnecessary incarceration and into treatment and indicates gaps in services. SIM enables community stakeholders from multiple systems to assess services along the continuum; recognizing the strengths within the community as well as identify opportunities for growth. The model assists community stakeholders to identify areas of invention, or intercepts, throughout the continuum.

In December of 2021, Marti Kardol, LPC (OOC Division of Forensic Services), Stephanie Zanker-Rivera, LPC (OOC Young Adult Services) and Lisa Zurolo, LCSW (OOC Evidence-Based Practices and Grants Division) attended a 2-day workshop in Albany, New York to become trained SIM Facilitators.

As a correction to the article in November’s newsletter, Ms. Kardol, Ms. Zanker-Rivera, and Ms. Zurolo facilitated the first SIM workshop in Fairfield on October 26th and 27th. Thirteen agencies were represented in the workshop with a total of 15 participants.



The Sequential Intercept Mapping workshop has three primary objectives:

1. Development of a comprehensive picture of how people with mental illness and co-occurring disorders flow through the criminal justice system along six distinct intercept points: (0) Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams/Co-Response, (1) Law Enforcement and Emergency Services, (2) Initial Detention and Initial Court Hearings, (3) Jails and Courts, (4) Reentry, and (5) Community Corrections/Community Support.
2. Identification of gaps and opportunities at each intercept for individuals in the target population.
3. Development of priorities for activities designed to improve system and service level responses for individuals in the target population

The mapping exercise provides the foundation of a plan to move the community forward in meeting the needs of individuals with mental health and/or substance use issues who are at risk of involvement or who are already involved with the criminal justice system.

As a result of this workshop, stakeholders in the Fairfield area identified three priorities for change: 1) improve communication and share resources between service providers; 2) amplify the voice of individuals with lived experience in a variety of areas; 3) create a resource “hub” that is updated in real time.

Ms. Kardol, Ms. Zanker-Rivera and Ms. Zurolo will continue to offer support and consultation to the Fairfield stakeholders as they work on their identified priorities. If you are interested in sponsoring a SIM workshop in your area, please reach out to the Assistant Director of Forensic Services, Christopher Burke (Christopher.P.Burke@ct.gov).

Prevention Corner

Since 1997, DMHAS has led the way in tobacco prevention in Connecticut by creating the [Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement Program \(TPEP\)](#) within the Prevention and Health Promotion Division to support compliance mandated by the federal Synar Amendment. All 50 states and the US territories participate in the Synar Program, which is designed to reduce tobacco use in any form, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), by enforcing state youth access laws. The Synar Amendment is important because it plays a federal role in substance misuse prevention and requires states to reduce sales of tobacco products to minors to 20% or less. Research shows that the enforcement of youth access laws through the Synar program is directly responsible for a portion of the decline in youth smoking. Restricting access is a proven strategy that works.



Commissioner Navarretta welcomed the new Youth Investigative Aides to the TPEP annual youth training on January 10, 2023

A September 2021 [study](#) published by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that more than 2 million U.S. middle and high school students reported currently using e-cigarettes, with more than 8 in 10 students reporting flavored e-cigarette use. During the COVID-19 pandemic Connecticut, like many states, saw a rise in tobacco retailers selling tobacco products to youth. To help address this rise in sales, over the past year the TPEP team has conducted over **6,000** unannounced compliance inspections enforcing both state and federal youth access laws at retail stores across Connecticut. We are now seeing an increase in retailer compliance which is returning to a pre-COVID level.

In 2022, the TPEP team worked with state and local police departments in over 40 communities to enforce youth access laws at the point of sale, which resulted in over **\$58,000** in criminal infractions. TPEP also has a Tobacco Merchant and Community Education Initiative to help inform, educate and bring awareness to tobacco retailers and communities on youth tobacco issues.

You can find more information on the [TPEP Press Release Page](#) to see us in the news or join our TPEP quarterly newsletter, [The Responsible Connecticut Retailer](#). There is a free online training program available to retailers and the public, [Tobacco and Electronic Cigarette Sales: Do the Right Thing](#). The Prevention and Health Promotion Division has a federal contract with the FDA to conduct thousands of inspections enforcing the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. You can learn more about FDA inspections [here](#). We will share more information on our FDA program in an upcoming DMHAS newsletter. Remember, the enforcement of both state and federal youth access laws is critical to the health and wellbeing of our young people!

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

As we begin 2023 with a newfound sense of energy and commitment to our work, we wanted to take the opportunity to introduce you to a team of DMHAS employees who are working to develop a statewide Human Trafficking workgroup and share their goals for this year. The team consists of the following employees:

- ◇ Janice Katilius, LCSW (Supervising Clinician, SMHA Norwich)
- ◇ Margaret Mowrey, LCSW (Site Director, WCMHN Danbury)
- ◇ Ellen Whelan, Psy.D. (Supervising Psychologist, WCMHN Waterbury YAS)
- ◇ Stephanie Zanker-Rivera, LPC (Behavioral Health Clinical Supervisor, YAS OOC)
- ◇ Lisa Zurolo, LCSW (Behavioral Health Clinical Supervisor, Evidence Based Practices OOC)

Members of the team are DCF-Certified Trainers in Introduction to Child Trafficking, and Stephanie and Marnie have been providing this training since 2017. Ellen and Lisa are newly-certified and will be offering their first training in the near future. Ellen and Stephanie also developed an expanded training which they provided to the Trauma and Gender Learning Collaborative at the [Women's Consortium](#) in December of 2022 as well as the YAS Point Person meeting earlier this month. Janice is trained in and has facilitated Not A Number groups, a child trafficking and exploitation prevention curriculum by [Love 146](#).

Over the past month (Human Trafficking Awareness/Prevention month), you have received e-mails related to Trafficking. Our first goal is to raise awareness through PSAs and sharing information. In addition, we plan to provide training throughout the year addressing prevention and trauma/survivor informed intervention. Trainings will include DCF Introduction to Child Trafficking as well as an expanded version for all DMHAS staff. We also hope to explore ways to integrate screening/assessment into the intake process with all of our clients. In the near future, we plan to expand the group to include additional individuals who may be interested.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to one of us:

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JANUARY IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



**NATIONAL
HUMAN
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